

# User Guidelines



PHONE: 706-821-1819 FAX: 706-821-1752

WEBSITE: www.augustaga.gov

#### **Fixed Route Service**

APT's fixed route service consists of bus service that operates on established routes, days and scheduled times in Richmond County. For information on fixed routes call (706) 821-1719.

We encourage our customers with disabilities to take advantage of the flexibility and independence that our fixed route bus services provides at a less expensive cost.

#### **Paratransit Service**

Paratransit service is a curb to curb bus service that is available to qualifying persons with permanent or temporary disabilities.

Paratransit is a unique service that is designed for individuals whose disabilities absolutely prevent them from using Augusta Public Transit's fixed route system.

#### **Rules of Conduct**

Individuals must adhere to rules of conduct. Reported actions of misconduct, including violent or disruptive behavior will be grounds for suspension of service. Anyone found to be acting in an unsafe manner, which might endanger the individual, other riders, the driver, or vehicle will be terminated from the service immediately. Augusta Public Transit will consider appeals for suspension of service due to misconduct on a case by case basis.

The Rules of Conduct apply to anyone who rides on Paratransit including disabled individuals, companions, and personal care attendants.

I have read, listened to or been read the Augusta Public Transit Paratransit User Guidelines and take responsibility for adhering to the Rules of Conduct.

Signature	Date

Please attach this page to your completed application and keep the guidelines for your records.

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Paratransit compliments APT's fixed routes by providing services at the same times and days of the fixed routes. When a fixed route in a particular area operates on a limited schedule, Paratransit services will operate at the same limited schedule. Paratransit is designed to maximize the mobility of persons with disabilities to allow access to shopping centers, medical facilities, educational centers and other areas.

#### Paratransit Service Area

The service area is within 3/4 mile on either side of the fixed bus routes.

# **Eligibility**

Eligibility is determined by a two-part application. The first part is completed by the individual or someone designated by the individual.

The second part is completed by a medical professional who knows the medical disability well enough to make an assessment.

# Eligibility Categories

All clients of Paratransit must be a resident of Richmond County and/or travel within the service area and meet one of the following four (4) categories listed.

# **Category 1**

Any individual who is unable to board, ride or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is usable and accessible by persons without disabilities, as a result of physical or mental impairment (including vision impairment) and without the assistance of another individual (except a wheelchair lift operator).

This applies to an individual who cannot independently board, ride or disembark from a bus on the fixed route system.

# Category 2

Individuals who can use accessible fixed route transit but can not board a regular bus stop because deployment of the bus lift is prohibited for safety reasons.

#### **Service Animals**

Under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws, individuals with disabilities are allowed to bring their service animal with them on the bus

ADA defines a service animal as an animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with disabilities.

The individual must maintain control of the animal at all times. The care or supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of the owner.

Augusta Public Transit reserves the right to exclude transportation to the service animal in the event the animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

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#### **Personal Items**

There is a limit of items that can be brought onto the bus. The items must be limited to how many the passenger can hold and/or the passenger can keep in the immediate area of that one (1) seat. Personal items can not be left on a separate seat or in a separate area other than the seat the customer is sitting in. If you have too many items when the bus arrives you can not be transported. Shopping carts are not allowed on the bus. Large items such as bicycles, furniture, televisions, etc. are not allow on the bus.



This applies to an individual who could ride a bus on the fixed route but cannot board because bus lift is inoperable, or low-floor is not available.

# **Category 3**

Individuals whose disability prevents them from traveling to or from a bus stop.

This applies to an individual who because of the disability, cannot access a bus stop to board the fixed system and cannot access the final destination after disembarking from a fixed route bus. Inconvenience in using the fixed route system is not a basis for eligibility.

# **Category 4**

Individuals whose disability prevents them from traveling to the designated fixed route bus stops due to an architectural barrier.

This applies to an individual who cannot access a fixed route bus because of hills, lack of curb cuts/wheelchair ramps, distance, weather conditions, lack of sidewalk, construction zones, lack of safe traffic controlled intersections.

#### **V**isitors

Persons visiting the area that are a certified passenger of another Paratransit program can obtain a visitor's status for 30 days. Certification credentials must be submitted prior to scheduling appointments.

#### **Curb to Curb Service**

The object of curb to curb service is to minimize the distance a rider must travel to utilize this service. The Paratransit bus will pull up as close as possible to the individuals home or other pick-up point.

The curb in front of the pickup location must be free of vehicles or other objects. Paratransit does not operate in private residential driveways and does not provide door-to-door service.

Drivers are not permitted to leave their vehicle unattended or to escort a customer to and from a building.

#### Wheelchair Lifts

Every bus has a wheelchair lift. The lifts can be used only for individuals in a wheelchair/scooter or an individual that cannot climb the steps into the bus. The lift cannot be used to load items onto the bus No one can stand on the lift while a passenger is on the lift. Wheelchairs must be backed onto the lift when boarding for safety as recommended by the manufacturer The office must be notified when there is a change in the wheelchair/scooter. The notification must be received prior to using the mobility device on the bus. If you do not notify the office you will not receive service until your file has been updated with the new information



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# **Personal Care Attendant (PCA)**

One (1) personal care attendant (PCA) riding with a customer can ride at no charge. The PCA cannot be another Paratransit customer. The PCA can be a family member, friend or a paid employee of the client. The PCA must leave from the same place as the Paratransit rider, assist the individual boarding, assist while in transit, assist departing the vehicle and have the exact travel arrangements as the customer.

# Companion

A customer may be accompanied by a travel companion. More than one travel companion may be accommodated on a space-available basis.

Travel Companions must pay the correct fare and must have the exact travel arrangements as the customer. The customer must inform the office when making the reservation whether a travel companion or a PCA will be accompanying the customer to ensure an accurate count of the individuals traveling on a vehicle.

#### No Outlet Streets

If your residence or a location where you would like to be picked up or dropped off is a no outlet street the Paratransit bus can not provide curb to curb service.

Our buses must not back up to turn around because of safety issues. Backing of large buses is extremely hazardous and has the potential to bring about injuries to pedestrians, occupants of other vehicles as well as occupants of the bus. Damage to property, be it the bus, other vehicles or buildings are also a real possibility.

#### The Cost

The cost is double the fixed route bus fare. There are three (3) different fares: \$2.50, \$3.50, or \$6.00 depending on the origin and destination of the trip. Passengers are required to have exact change upon boarding the vehicle.

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If a passenger does not pay, it will affect the eligibility of further transportation services. Transportation tickets are available for purchase. To purchase tickets call the office at 821-1819 to request the amount of tickets and the day the tickets need to be sent out. The tickets prices are \$2.50, 3.50 or 6.00 Any amount of tickets can be purchased.

# **Application Process**

To apply, please call APT Paratransit at (706) 821-1819 from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Upon request, an application can be mailed, obtained at Augusta Public Transit 1535 Fenwick Street, Augusta, Georgia, or located at our website

# www.augustaga.gov Departments Public Transit

The application process takes approximately 21 days from receipt of a **completed** application.

Three "No Shows will result in the suspension of the individuals privilege to ride Paratransit for a period of thirty (30) days. Paratransit understands that emergency situations occur in which the individual is unable to contact the office to notify them of a cancellation or delay. In such situations it will be evaluated and the individual may not be marked as a "No Show" for that day. Individuals are responsible for paying for "No Shows".

### Who Can Travel With Me?



When a customer is unable to travel alone, APT encourages an appropriately certified individual, known as a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to ride with the customer. The need for a PCA is determined by the customer's Health Care Professional. Form on the application.

If it is determined that there is a need for a PCA, someone should ride with you and assist you on and off the Paratransit Bus each time you ride.

# Cancellations

A cancellation of a scheduled trip between the hours of 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. must be called in to the Paratransit office at 821-1819 at least two (2) hours in advance. Any cancellations before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. can be made at 821-1719. This number is only to be called during those specific hours. Failure to cancel a trip within two (2) hours will be considered a "No Show".



#### No Shows

The following situations are classified as a no show:

- 1) An individual is not at the designated pick up or drop off point as scheduled when the Paratransit bus arrives and the driver has waited five (5) minutes past the scheduled time.
- 2) An individual's cancellation has not been called in at least two (2) hours prior to pick up.

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A letter of approval or disapproval will be received after the 21 day process is complete. If the individual is considered ineligible, the individual has the right to appeal the decision. An appeal can be made by calling the office at 821-1819.

Part A of the application for Paratransit Services must be completed by the applicant, a representative or a legal guardian who is familiar with the applicant's disability and his/her ability to travel on a bus. The application must not be submitted incomplete. All questions must be answered and the application signed or the application will not be processed.

Part B of the application must be completed by a Certified Health Care Professional. The Health Care Professional must be a licensed or certified professional who is qualified to assess the applicant's disability and his/her functional ability to use public transit. The application must not be submitted incomplete. All questions must be answered and the application signed or the application will not be processed.

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**Full Name** 

# Telephone Number Where You Can Be Reached

Time and Date You Are Requesting To Be Picked Up

**Address Of Pick Up Point** 

**Address Of Destination** 

**Return Trip Time** 

You will not receive a call back unless your request had to be changed to accommodate the schedule.

At times it is necessary to change requested times. Paratransit reserves the right to negotiate the times within an hour of the requested time (before or after). It is important that a contact number is left in case the time needs to be changed. Since telephone contact is not always possible, we ask that the individual be ready at least thirty (30) minutes prior to scheduled pick up time.

The application process will be completed within twenty-one (21) calendar days of receipt in the Paratransit Office if all questions on Part A and Part B are answered. The twenty-one (21) day processing requirement will not apply to incomplete applications.

The customer will be notified in writing about his/her eligibility. Eligibility will be honored for three (3) years. It is the customer's responsibility to reapply for service prior to one's eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew their Paratransit eligibility, he/she will be suspended from service until recertification is completed.

# **Notification of Application Status**

The customer will be notified in writing within the twenty-one (21) day waiting period. Incomplete documents will be returned to applicant for completion. If there is no response, the applicant's file will be closed-out after one (1) month but can be reopened upon the customer's request.

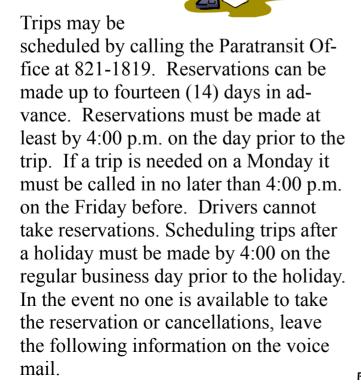
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#### **Office Hours**

The Paratransit Office is open Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The office is closed on all major holidays that are observed by the City of Augusta Government. Voicemail is available to leave your requests if the telephone is in use or the office is closed.

# **Scheduling Trips**



If the application is approved the customer can begin making reservations immediately.

If the application is denied and you do not agree with the decision, you have the right to an appeal. Appeals must be filed, in writing, within sixty (60) days of your receipt of a denial letter.



Mail Letter of Appeal to: Augusta Public Transit Appeals 1535 Fenwick Street Augusta, GA 30904

#### **Service Hours**

Paratransit service hours are comparable to the regular fixed bus route system. If a fixed route does not operate on a certain day, the Paratransit system does not operate on that day.



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